Origin of T_c Enhancement Induced by Doping Yttrium and Hydrogen into LaFeAsO-based Superconductors: 57 Fe-, 75 As-, 139 La-, and 1 H-NMR Studies

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We report our extensive 57 Fe-, 75 As-, 139 La-, and 1 H-NMR studies of La_{0.8}Y_{0.2}FeAsO_{1-y} (La_{0.8}Y_{0.2}1111) and LaFeAsO_{1-y}H_x(La1111H), where doping yttrium (Y) and hydrogen (H) into optimally doped LaFeAsO_{1-y} (La1111(OPT)) increases T_c =28 K to 34 and 32 K, respectively. In the superconducting (SC) state, the measurements of nuclear-spin lattice-relaxation rate $1/T_1$ have revealed in terms of a multiple fully gapped s_{\pm} -wave model that the SC gap and T_c in La_{0.8}Y_{0.2}1111 become larger than those in La1111(OPT) without any change in doping level. In La1111H, the SC gap and T_c also increase slightly even though a decrease in carrier density and some disorders are significantly introduced. As a consequence, we suggest that the optimization of both the structural parameters and the carrier doping level to fill up the bands is crucial for increasing T_c among these La1111-based compounds through the optimization of the Fermi surface topology.

KEYWORDS: superconductivity, iron-based oxypnictide, LaFeAsO, NMR

Immediately after the discovery of superconductivity (SC) in the iron-oxypnictide LaFeAsO_{1-x}F_x ($T_c = 26$ K), it was reported that the replacement of La by other rare-earth (Ln) elements significantly increases the transition temperature T_c up to more than 50 K.²⁻⁴ Lee et al. found that T_c increases up to a maximum of 55 K when the FeAs₄ tetrahedron is transformed into a regular one.⁵ Related to this, structural parameters such as the a-axis length 4,6,7 and height of pnictogen from the Fe plane⁸ also exhibit an intimate correlation with T_c in the LnFeAsO(Ln1111) system. Systematic measurements by spectroscopies have been performed extensively on $M\text{Fe}_2\text{As}_2(M122)$ and FeSe systems, probing the multiband character of their Fermi surfaces and the development of antiferromagnetic (AFM) spin fluctuations, but not sufficiently on Ln1111 systems because high-quality single crystals of sufficiently large size are not yet available. In previous NMR studies of Nd1111 $(T_c=53 \text{ K})$ and Pr1111 $(T_c=47 \text{ K})$, 10,11 4f-electronderived magnetic fluctuations prevented us from deducing the normal-state properties and SC characteristics of FeAs layers. Under these situations, the reason why T_c is highest in the Ln1111 system has not yet been addressed. Recently, it has been reported that T_c can be increased by either Y or H substitution in the La1111 system without replacing magnetic rare-earth elements, 6,12,13 in which the angle α of As-Fe-As bonding and the a-axis length approach those of the Nd1111 system with the highest T_c to date (see Fig. 1(a)).

In this Letter, we report the normal-state and SC characteristics of ${\rm La_{0.8}Y_{0.2}FeAsO_{1-y}}$ ($T_c=34~{\rm K}$) and ${\rm LaFeAsO_{1-y}H_x}$ ($T_c=32~{\rm K}$) determined using extensive NMR measurements of $^{57}{\rm Fe}$, $^{75}{\rm As}$, $^{139}{\rm La}$, and $^{1}{\rm H}$. We address the important correlation between the evolution

of the electronic state caused by Y and H substitutions and the optimization of the local structure of the FeAs₄ tetrahedron in these La1111 systems.

⁵⁷Fe-enriched polycrystalline samples $La_{0.8}Y_{0.2}FeAsO_{0.7}$ and $LaFeAsO_{0.58}H_{0.58}$ each with a nominal composition were synthesized via a highpressure synthesis technique. 3, 6, 13 Although the oxygen and hydrogen contents of the samples differ from the nominal composition during the oxidation of the starting rare-earth elements, the X-ray diffraction measurements indicate that these samples are almost of a single phase. We hereafter denote these samples as La_{0.8}Y_{0.2}1111 and La1111H. The respective $T_c = 34$ and 32 K for La_{0.8}Y_{0.2}1111 and La_{1111H} were uniquely determined by a steep variation in susceptibility, being higher than $T_c=28 \text{ K for La}1111(\text{OPT}).^{14,15} \text{ As shown in Fig. 1(a)},$ which was reported in the literature, 4,6,7 note that the a-axis length of La1111H and La_{0.8}Y_{0.2}1111 is closer to the optimum value for reaching the maximum T_c than that of optimally doped $LaFeAsO_{1-y}(La1111(OPT))$. The NMR measurements of ⁵⁷Fe, ⁷⁵As, ¹³⁹La, and ¹H were performed on most oriented powder samples of $La_{0.8}Y_{0.2}1111$ and La1111H. The nuclear spin-lattice relaxation rate $(1/T_1)$ was measured in the field $H \perp c$ by the saturation-recovery method.

Figure 1(b) shows the 57 Fe-NMR spectra obtained by sweeping a frequency (f) at a magnetic field H=11.97 T at 30 K. The 57 Fe-NMR spectra become broader in La_{0.8}Y_{0.2}1111 and La1111H than in La1111(OPT)¹⁵ as a result of the substitution of either Y or H. In particular, an extremely broadened 57 Fe-NMR spectral width of La1111H is almost independent of temperature, suggesting that H doping makes local magnetic states quite inhomogeneous through the distribution of uniform spin susceptibility and/or the hyperfine-coupling constant at

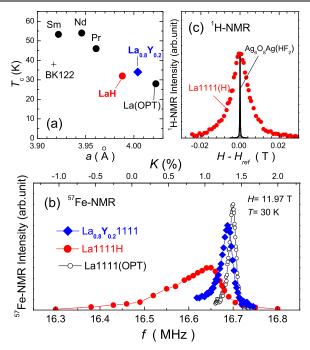


Fig. 1. (color online) (a) Plot of T_c vs a-axis length for La_{0.8}Y_{0.2}1111, La1111H, and Ln1111 systems.^{6,7} (b) Comparison of the ⁵⁷Fe-NMR spectra of La_{0.8}Y_{0.2}1111 and La1111H at 30 K with that of La1111(OPT).¹⁵ (c) Comparison of the ¹H-NMR spectrum in La1111H with that of stoichiometric compound Ag₆O₈Ag(HF₂) at $H \sim 3.916$ T and $T \sim 100$ K.

the Fe site. By contrast, the 57 Fe-NMR spectral width of La_{0.8}Y_{0.2}1111 is significantly narrower than that of La₁₁₁₁H. This suggests that the Y³⁺ substitution for La³⁺ introduces fewer disorders than H-doping. The ¹H-NMR spectrum for La₁₁₁₁H is presented in Fig. 1(c). Note that the ¹H-NMR spectral width of approximately 90 Oe is much broader than those of stoichiometric compounds including H ions located at a regular crystallographic site, for instance, 2.6 Oe in Ag₆O₈Ag(HF₂). This may be due to the wide distribution of the transferred hyperfine fields at the H site induced by Fe-spin polarization. Since the ¹H-NMR spectral shape is symmetric, most of the H ions may occupy a single site within the LaFeAsO structure.

In order to shed further light on the local disorder introduced by substitution, we compare the site dependences of the NMR spectral widths (W) at 40 K measured by 57 Fe-, 75 As-, and 139 La-NMR in La_{0.8}Y_{0.2}1111 and La1111H, as shown in Fig. 2. Here, each W is normalized by W_0 defined by that of La1111(OPT). In La1111H (La_{0.8}Y_{0.2}1111), the ratio of the linewidth W/W_0 at the Fe and La sites is larger (smaller) than that at the As site, suggesting that the H ions occupy an interstitial site between the La and Fe sites, which induces local disorder especially at Fe and La sites. Taking the decrease in the carrier density of La1111H into account, to be discussed later, the doped H ions will exist as negatively charged H⁻ ions, which may be stable at the interstitial site surrounded by positively charged La^{3+} and Fe^{-2+} ions, as indicated in the inset of Fig. 2(a).

Figure 3(a) shows the T dependences of $^{75}(1/T_1T)$

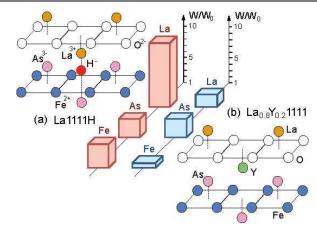


Fig. 2. (color online) Site dependences of the NMR spectral width (W) at 40 K of 57 Fe, 75 As, and 139 La for (a) La1111H and (b) La_{0.8}Y_{0.2}1111. Each W is normalized by W_0 defined by those of La1111(OPT). In La1111H (La_{0.8}Y_{0.2}1111), each W/W_0 at the Fe and La sites is larger (smaller) than that at the As site, suggesting that the H ions predominantly occupy an interstitial site between the La and Fe sites. Taking the decrease in the carrier density of La1111H into account, the doped H ions will exist as negatively charged H⁻ ions.

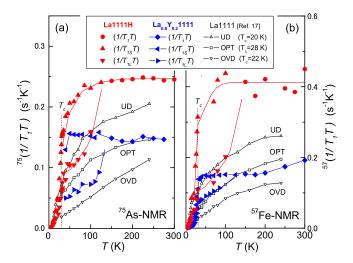


Fig. 3. (color online) T dependences of $1/T_1T$ s of (a)⁷⁵As- and (b) ⁵⁷Fe-NMR for $\text{La}_{0.8}\text{Y}_{0.2}$ 1111 and La1111H. The comparison with those of La1111 compounds¹⁶ reveals that the electron doping level of $\text{La}_{0.8}\text{Y}_{0.2}$ 1111 is close to that of La1111(OPT),^{16, 17} but that La1111H is in the underdoped regime.

for La_{0.8}Y_{0.2}1111 and La1111H. In both compounds, $^{75}(1/T_1)$ can be determined by a single T_1 component above ~ 150 K, indicating that the electronic state seems to be almost uniform over the sample. At T range below ~ 150 K, however, $^{75}T_1$ exhibits an apparent distribution in association with the substitution of either Y or H. The short component $^{75}T_{1S}$ and the long component $^{75}T_{1L}$, determined by the same method in ref. 16, are plotted in the figure. In La_{0.8}Y_{0.2}1111, the $^{75}(1/T_{1S}T)$ shows a nearly constant behavior above T_c , whereas $^{75}(1/T_{1L}T)$ shows a gradual decrease upon cooling, which resembles the 75 As-NMR result of La1111(OPT). It was reported that the $^{75}(1/T_1T)$ at high T decreases markedly as the doping level of electron carriers increases in the La1111

system, 16,17 which was corroborated by $^{57}(1/T_1T)$, as indicated in Fig. 3(b). Here, we note that the ${}^{57,75}(1/T_1T)$ at 250 K for La_{0.8}Y_{0.2}1111 is comparable to that for La1111(OPT). This reveals that the electron doping level of $La_{0.8}Y_{0.2}1111$ is close to that of La1111(OPT), confirming that the Y³⁺ substitution for La³⁺ does not change the doping level. By contrast, in La1111H, it is remarkable that the $1/T_1T_5$ of both ⁵⁷Fe- and ⁷⁵As-NMR at 250 K are markedly larger than those of La1111(OPT), the latter being comparable to $^{75}(1/T_1T)$ for the underdoped LaFeAsO_{0.93} $F_{0.07}$ ($T_c = 22.5$ K).¹⁷ This implies that La1111H is in an underdoped regime. When noted that the doped H atoms are located at the interstitial site surrounded by positively charged Fe^{~2+} and La³⁺ sites (see Fig.2(a)), it is anticipated that the doped H atoms will exist as H⁻ ions to reduce the doping level. Furthermore, the significant increase in $1/T_1T$ upon cooling was not observed in both compounds even though the Knight shift for $La_{1-x}Y_x1111$ is almost constant against T^{10} suggesting that strong AFM spin fluctuations do not develop in these compounds.

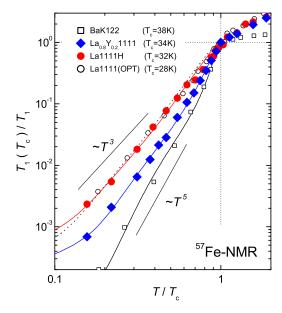


Fig. 4. (color online) T dependences of 57 Fe- $(T_1(T_c)/T_1)$ normalized at T_c in the SC state of La_{0.8}Y_{0.2}1111 and La1111H, along with the results reported for BaK122 and La1111(OPT). ¹⁸ The multiple fully gapped s_{\pm} -wave model allows us to deduce the parameters for all the compounds listed in Table I through the fitting of the T dependence of 57 Fe- $(T_1(T_c)/T_1)$. Here, the T_{1L} components are plotted for La_{0.8}Y_{0.2}1111 and La1111H, since both T_1 -components show the same T dependence when normalized by the values at T_c .

Next, we address the SC characteristics of these compounds. Figure 4 shows the T dependence of $^{57}(T_1(T_c)/T_1)$ normalized at their T_c s. Since the T dependences of both T_{1S} and T_{1L} are almost the same, $^{57}(T_{1L}(T_c)/T_{1L})$ is presented in the figure. The $^{57}(T_{1L}(T_c)/T_{1L})$ of La_{0.8}Y_{0.2}1111 decreases similarly to $\sim T^4$ upon cooling below T_c , which differs from either the $\sim T^3$ in La1111(OPT)¹⁵ or the $\sim T^5$ in Ba_{0.6}K_{0.4}Fe₂As₂(BaK122). This emphasizes that a

common power law like the T dependence of $1/T_1$ is not evident among Fe-based superconductors. These results are in contrast to the behavior of $1/T_1 \sim T^3$ commonly observed in high- T_c cuprates, which are d-wave superconductors with line-node gaps. Meanwhile, it was shown in the literature that the relaxation behaviors of both the $\sim T^3$ in La1111(OPT)^{15,19} and the $\sim T^5$ in $Ba_{0.6}K_{0.4}Fe_2As_2$ (BaK122)¹⁸ are consistently reproduced in terms of the multiple fully gapped s_+ -wave model.¹⁹ This model is also applicable for understanding the SC characteristics of $La_{0.8}Y_{0.2}1111$ and La1111H as follows. According to Model B in the literature, ¹⁸ we assume that respective Fermi surfaces (FS1 and FS2) have isotropic gaps as $\Delta^{FS1} \equiv \Delta_L$ and $\Delta^{FS2} \equiv \Delta_S$, and the fraction of the density of states (DOS) at FS1 is taken as $N_{FS1}/(N_{FS1} + N_{FS2}) (=0.7)^{20}$ Furthermore, the coherence factor is neglected on the assumption that the interband scattering between the sign reversal gaps becomes dominant for the relaxation process in these compounds. In fact, the T dependence of ${}^{57}(T_1(T_c)/T_1)$ of La_{0.8}Y_{0.2}1111 is consistently reproduced with the parameters $2\Delta_L/k_BT_c = 6.9(\Delta_S/\Delta_L=0.35)$ and the smearing factor $\eta = 0.04\Delta_L$,²⁰ as is shown by the solid line in Fig. 4. A damping effect of quasiparticles due to impurity scattering introduced by the Y substitution can be deduced from η , which was actually larger than η_0 in La1111(OPT)(see Table I). Notably, $2\Delta_L/k_BT_c = 6.9$ in La_{0.8}Y_{0.2}1111 is larger than the $2\Delta_L/k_BT_c$ 4.4 in La1111(OPT), revealing that the Y substitution into La1111 increases T_c up to 34 K in association with a strong-coupling effect to mediate the Cooper pairs. Note that the strong-coupling effect enhances T_c despite the disorder introduced by Y substitution.

Table I. Evolutions of the SC gap (Δ_L) and smearing factor (η) obtained from the analyses of 57 Fe- $(T_1(T_c)/T_1)$ assuming the multiple fully gapped s_{\pm} wave model (Model B) that was applied to BK122 and La1111(OPT)¹⁸ (see text). Here, Δ_L represents the larger of the two full gaps. η/η_0 represents a damping effect of quasiparticles additionally introduced by Y or H substitution, where η_0 is defined as that of La1111(OPT).

	T_c	a	$\alpha(^{\circ})^{\dagger}$	$2\Delta_L$	η/Δ_L	η/η_0
	(K)	(Å)		$/k_BT_c$		
$BaK122^{18}$	38	3.914	109.7^{21}	9.4	0.015	0.64
$La_{0.8}Y_{0.2}1111$	34	4.004	112.3	6.9	0.04	1.3
La1111H	32	3.989	111.7	~ 4.7	~ 0.06	~ 1.3
$La1111(OPT)^{18}$	28	4.023	113.2	4.4	0.05	1

†) The angle α of As-Fe-As bonding is evaluated from the α -axis length at room T and a fixed bond length of Fe-As $\sim 2.41 \text{Å}$, which holds empirically in La1111 system.⁵

As for La1111H, it is possible that $^{57}(T_{1L}(T_c)/T_{1L})$ is also reproduced roughly in terms of Model B with the parameters $2\Delta_L/k_BT_c \sim 4.7(\Delta_S/\Delta_L=0.35)$ and $\eta \sim 0.06\Delta_L$, similarly to those in La1111(OPT), as shown by the solid line in Fig. 4. Despite the fact that the electron carrier density is lower than that in La1111(OPT) and the disorder is heavily introduced into the Fe site, which is deduced from $\eta/\eta_0 \sim 1.3$, T_c is enhanced up to 32 K. As a result, the reason why T_c increases in La1111H may

be closely related to the slight increase in the SC gap as well.

All the parameters listed in Table I are obtained from the analyses of the T_1 results based on the two fully gapped s_{\pm} wave model(Model B). In the case of BaK122, which has the largest gap of $2\Delta_L/k_BT_c = 9.4$, the development of AFM spin fluctuations is argued to be the origin of the strong-coupling effect, making the SC gap quite large. 18 By contrast, the T_1 measurements in the normal state do not point to the development of AFM spin fluctuations in La_{0.8}Y_{0.2}1111 or other La₁₁₁₁ systems.¹⁶ The reason why $2\Delta_L/k_BT_c = 6.9$ is larger in $La_{0.8}Y_{0.2}1111$ than in $La_{1111}(OPT)$ is not primarily ascribed to AFM spin fluctuations at low energies. We suggest that the structural parameter $\alpha=109.7^{\circ}$ for BaK122²¹ is the same as that of the regular tetrahedron, whereas the $\alpha=112.3^{\circ}$ for La_{0.8}Y_{0.2}1111 is larger. This suggests that the SC energy gap increases as α approaches $\alpha=109.47^{\circ}$ for a regular tetrahedron. Furthermore, note that T_c increases as the a-axis length decreases in going from La1111(OPT) to BaK122, as shown in Table I. Here, we should comment on why the T_c in La1111H is lower than that in La_{0.8}Y_{0.2}1111, despite the structural parameters such as the a-axis length and the angle α being closer to those of BK122 than to those of La_{0.8}Y_{0.2}1111; This may be because the electron doping level in La1111H is lower than that in $La_{0.8}Y_{0.2}11111$, in addition to some disorder effect. In this context, the optimization of both the structural parameters and the carrier doping level to fill up the bands is crucial for increasing their T_c through the optimization of the Fermi surface topology.

In summary, the systematic NMR measurements of La_{0.8}Y_{0.2}FeAsO_{1-y} (T_c =34 K) and LaFeAsO_{1-y}H_x $(T_c=32 \text{ K})$ have revealed that the Y³⁺ substitution does not change the doping level in La_{0.8}Y_{0.2}1111, whereas H-doping decreases the carrier density in La1111H. The $1/T_1$ results in the SC state for both compounds are consistently interpreted in terms of the multiple fully gapped s_+ -wave model. Thus, it is highlighted that the SC gap and T_c in La_{0.8}Y_{0.2}1111 become larger than those in La1111(OPT) without any change in doping level. Furthermore, the T_c and SC gap in La1111H slightly increases even though the decrease in carrier density and some disorders are heavily introduced. We suggest that the primary reason why T_c is increased in these La-based 1111 compounds is neither the change in doping level nor the development of AFM spin fluctuations, but the structural parameters approaching their optimum values to increase T_c for the bond angle α of the FeAs₄ tetrahedron and the a-axis length. Systematic spectroscopies of the SC properties of Ln1111 systems with the highest T_c of more than 50 K are highly desired in the future in order to clarify the Fermi surface topology, the antiferromagnetic spin fluctuations in the normal state, and their relevance to SC gap structures.

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